

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 043218
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APPROVED BY EUR/SOV:MGARRISON
S/MS:CKAMMAN

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P 180043Z FEB 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 043218

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL QUERY ON EMBASSY CONTACTS AND POUCH
PROCEDURES

REF: MOSCOW 1798 AND PREVIOUS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SUGGESTED REPLY TO CONGRESSMAN
SIMON: TEXT WOULD BE USED AS STANDARD LANGUAGE TO REPLY TO
OTHER INQUIRES.

2. QUOTE: THE PRESS REPORTS TO WHICH YOU REFER ARE MIS-
LEADING ON SEVERAL POINTS. THE EMBASSY HAS NOT INSTITUTED
A RULE REQUIRING THAT EMBASSY OFFICERS OBTAIN PRIOR CLEAR-
ANCE FOR ALL CONTACTS WITH SOVIET CITIZENS, AND IT IS NOT
TRUE THAT EMBASSY PROCEDURES HAVE RESULTED IN A SIGNIFICANT
DECREASE IN CONTACTS BETWEEN SOVIET DISSIDENTS AND CITIZENS
AND OUR EMBASSY STAFF. OUR POLICY AND THAT OF OUR EMBASSY
IN MOSCOW IS TO ENCOURAGE MORE AND BROADER CONTACTS IN
SOVIET SOCIETY. AMBASSADOR TOON DOES FOLLOW THESE MATTERS
CLOSELY AND EMBASSY OFFICERS DO CHECK WITH HIM PRIOR TO
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MEETINGS WITH PROMINENT NON-OFFICIAL SOVIET CITIZENS. THIS
OPERATING PROCEDURE IS NOT MEANT TO LIMIT CONTACTS BUT IS
DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO HAVE CONTACTS
WITH SOVIET CITIZENS ARE KEPT FULLY INFORMED. THERE IS NO
LIMITATION ON THE NUMBER OF EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO ARE AUTHOR-
IZED TO HAVE SUCH CONTACTS, AND IN FACT, THE TREND IS TOWARD
AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF OFFICERS INVOLVED. END QUOTE.

3. QUOTE: WITH REGARD TO YOUR QUERY CONCERNING THE USE OF OUR DIPLOMATIC POUCH, THE EMBASSY INFORMS US THAT NO NEW POLICY HAS BEEN INSTITUTED WHICH MATERIALLY AFFECTS MATERIALS WHICH ARE CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE FOR TRANSMITTAL BY POUCH. THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH IS OF COURSE, A PRIVILEGED CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ABROAD AND ITS USES ARE GOVERNED BY THE VIENNA CONVENTION OF 1961, AS WELL AS BY GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS. CORRESPONDENTS, BUSINESSMEN AND EXCHANGE STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED TO RECEIVE BOOKS AND PROFESSIONAL MATERIALS VIA U.S. GOVERNMENT POUCH FACILITIES IF THEY ARE SENT BY THEIR HOME OFFICES OR SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS. END QUOTE.

4. QUOTE: IF YOU HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS ON THESE ISSUES, OUR OFFICE OF SOVIET UNION AFFAIRS WOULD BE GLAD TO BRIEF YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR STAFF. END OF QUOTE.

5. WE HAVE CONSULTED WITH AMBASSADOR TOON, WHO HAS CLEARED TEXT WITH EXCEPTION OF PARA 3 ABOVE. AMBASSADOR TOON ASKED THAT WE CHECK WITH EMBASSY ON WHETHER THIS INFORMATION ON POUCH USE HAS BEEN MADE PUBLIC BEFORE. IT WAS OUR EXPRESSION THAT IT HAD BEEN RELEASED THROUGH EMBASSY NOTICES TO AMERICAN RESIDENTS IN MOSCOW, BUT AMBASSADOR THOUGHT THEY HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO READ NOTICES AND THAT NOTICES HAD NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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BEEN RELEASED. PLEASE ADVISE. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Draft Date: 18 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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